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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [SNAR](#) [AF](#) [NL](#)  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/AFGHANISTAN: ANNOYED BY INITIAL  
ERADICATION OPERATIONS

REF: KABUL 1426

Classified By: CDA Chat Blakeman, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) Summary: The Dutch MFA is irate the GOA violated one of the conditions the Dutch set concerning poppy eradication operations in Uruzgan province. According to the MFA, the Dutch embassy in Kabul raised its objections with the GOA and the U.S. Embassy, and may raise them at the NATO foreign ministerial in Oslo. MFA Task Force Uruzgan Coordinator Pieter-Jan Kleiweg de Zwaan discussed these issues with polmiloff on April 26. End summary.

12. (C) Kleiweg said the Dutch agreed to support Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) operations in Uruzgan province contingent upon the GOA honoring certain conditions: 1) eradication operations only occur to the west of Tarin Kowt; 2) targeting large farmers, not small farmers; 3) "tribally neutral" targeting; and 4) follow-up review by the United Nations and USAID. Kleiweg confirmed that the condition regarding eradication operations to the west of Tarin Kowt was intended to focus on land owned and operated by former Uruzgan governor Jan Mohammed Khan. Kleiweg said the Dutch had "clearly articulated" these conditions in Kabul, and "received assurances" the GOA would honor them.

13. (C) Kleiweg said AEF poppy eradication began in Uruzgan on April 26, but "already on the first day" the AEF had violated one of the Dutch conditions. According to Kleiweg, the AEF was set to cross over the Vanu Bridge to proceed to fields to the west of Tarin Kowt, but observed large poppy fields on the eastern side of the Helmand River and initiated eradication operations to the east of Tarin Kowt. Kleiweg said that it was "clear" from the Dutch perspective that the eradication operations had "already fallen victim to Uruzgan internal politics."

14. (S) Kleiweg reiterated that poppy eradication was an

extremely sensitive issue in the Dutch cabinet, especially as Development Minister Bert Koenders opposes eradication. "The fact that Koenders publicly supported the need for eradication during the parliamentary debate," on April 25, said Kleiweg, "was nearly impossible to arrange." In fact, Kleiweg said the MFA had deliberately chosen not to inform Koenders that the first day of eradication occurred to the east of Tarin Kowt.

15. (C) Kleiweg said the Dutch embassy in Kabul has raised objections with the GOA and U.S. Embassy, and was told the AEF had "made a mistake" (as reported reftel). He said the Dutch may raise these objections in Washington and during the NATO informal foreign ministerial in Oslo on April 27. Kleiweg noted that Foreign Minister Verhagen has said that the Dutch could apply a "political veto" to any eradication operation in Uruzgan should the conditions the Dutch set not be honored. However, Kleiweg was not sure how such a "veto" would work, especially as eradication is a GOA policy.

Comment

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16. (C) Eradication in Uruzgan remains an extremely sensitive issue for the Dutch, especially for Koender's Labor Party. At a time when the cabinet is just beginning the internal debate on whether and in what form to extend the Dutch presence in Uruzgan, any perception that Dutch concerns are not being taken seriously will play into the hands of those -- mainly on the left -- pushing to end the deployment in Summer 2008, as currently scheduled. Such incidents as today's AEF operation, even when accidental, will not help make the case for an extension in the cabinet or Parliament. As reported reftel, the AEF will resume operations tomorrow

in agreed areas. In addition to possibly raising this incident in Oslo, Verhagen will most likely want to discuss Afghan eradication efforts with ONDCP Director John Walters when he visits here on May 7.

BLAKEMAN